

REMARKS

Claims 1-34 are pending in the application. Claims 1-34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Habib et al. (U.S. 5,825,356) (“Habib”). Independent Claims 1, 12, 23, and 24 are being amended. No new matter is being introduced by way of these amendments.

Claim 1 as now amended recites, “a graphical overlay positioned over said graphical user interface . . . including (i) a first step indication . . . to indicate to the user a first interaction with the graphical user interface the user is to perform to complete the first step and (ii) a next step indication . . . automatically displayed upon the user’s completion of the first step to indicate to the user a next interaction with the graphical user interface the user is perform to complete the next step.” Applicant believes that the amendments more clearly define the inventive software training and technical support in which step indications are displayed in a graphical overlay over a graphical user interface in a manner indicating to the user interaction the user is to perform.

As disclosed in the specification as originally filed on page 2, line 19 through page 3, line 10, the approaches in the prior art tend to restrict a user’s maximum learning potential. For example, the embedded “help window” help system approach opens an external window from the graphical user interface (GUI) with which the user must interact, thereby causing a loss of attention and disjointed learning. The so-called “wizard” help system approach tends to take a substantial amount of control away from the user, thereby providing function, but not user learning. The so-called “show me” help system approach requires a user to first open a separate window, then takes full control from the user, resulting in the same problems as the wizard approach.

Applicants’ invention as recited in claim 1 is similar to a “wizard” help system to the extent that it permits a user to specify tasks, but the on-line coach of Claim 1 does not substitute its own interface. Instead, the on-line coach uses the GUI and guides the user through the individual steps through use of the graphical overlay to display step indications in an automated manner to indicate to the user corresponding interactions with the GUI the user is to perform to complete the steps of the given task.

In contrast to Applicants' invention as recited in amended Claim 1, Habib discloses three forms of help systems that Applicants describe above and as originally filed in the specification on page 2, line 19 through page 3, line 10 as being prior art help systems.

In particular, Habib discloses in column 4, lines 4-26, a "help window" help system (column 4, line 4), a "wizard" help system (i.e., "do-it-all" button 88, column 4, lines 15-19), and a "show me" help system (column 4, lines 20-26).

Referring first to the "help window" help system embodiment in column 4, lines 4-14, Habib states in column 4, lines 9-11, that "[t]o use the help system, the user reads the instructions in the list and completes each step within the underlying program window 82." In this "help window" help system embodiment, Habib does not disclose having "a graphical overlay positioned over said graphical user interface," as recited in Applicants' claim 1. Without the graphical overlay, a user of Habib's "help window" help system must turn attention from the help window to the graphical user interface and back again, which can make learning how to perform tasks in the graphical user interface difficult for the user. Moreover, Habib does not disclose in relation to the "help window" help system embodiment providing "a first step indication . . . and a next step indication . . . automatically displayed upon the user's completion of the first step" in a graphical overlay positioned over the graphical user interface. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the "help window" help system disclosed by Habib does not anticipate or suggest Applicants' invention as recited in claim 1.

Turning now to Habib's "wizard" help system embodiment as disclosed in column 4, lines 15-19, Applicants describe above how taking away user interaction with the graphical user interface results in a user's inability to learn how to interact with the graphical user interface. More particularly, Applicants respectfully submit that the "wizard" help system disclosed by Habib teaches away from Applicants' invention as recited in now amended claim 1 ("a first step indication directing the user's attention to a first selectable graphical user area to indicate to the user a first interaction with the graphical interface the user is to perform to complete the first step") because the "wizard" does all the work. In other words, Habib's "wizard" help system embodiment automatically performs the step so that the user specifically does not perform any interaction with the graphical user interface, nor does Habib's "wizard" help system embodiment direct the user's attention to any part of the graphical user interface since it automatically

performs the steps in response to the user's request for it to do so. Thus, the "wizard" help system embodiment does not anticipate every limitation as recited in amended claim 1 ("to indicate to the user a first interaction . . . the user is to perform").

Referring now to the "show me" help system disclosed by Habib in column 4, lines 20-26, Habib's "show me" help system embodiment "operates to illustrate the next step in the series of steps required to complete a desired task." Habib states that "if the user is unsure where to place the curser, the user selects the show-me button 90 and the curser is moved by the help system to the appropriate spot in the window 82 of the underlying program and the step is executed." Thus, the "show me" help system embodiment disclosed by Habib again takes control away from the user and, therefore, the user does not interact with the graphical interface to complete the step in the given task.

In the "show me" help system embodiment, in contrast to the "help window" or "wizard" embodiments described above, Habib further discloses use of a balloon or a bubble indicator 98 (Fig. 5, "select watermark") to indicate to the user what to do next. The balloon or bubble indicator 98 differs from the "graphical overlay" as recited in Applicants' claim 1. Habib discloses use of the balloon or bubble indicator in connection only with the "show me" help system embodiment, which means that the balloon or bubble indicator is not provided or considered to be necessary with either the "help window" or "wizard" help system embodiments. Therefore, since the "show me" help system embodiment executes the step, Applicants' are left to conclude that the balloon or bubble indicator is only temporarily indicated over the graphical user interface prior to Habib's "show me" help system embodiment's completion of the step.

Even if the balloon or bubble indicator is positioned over the graphical user interface to inform the user what the user is to do next, such use of the balloon or bubble indicator is only active for one step, as disclosed by Habib in column 4, lines 21 and 33. Thus, even if Habib's "show me" help system embodiment does not automatically complete a given task, Habib does not go on to disclose that the balloon or bubble indicator is automatically displayed for indicating to the user how to complete a next step in a task, which is a limitation recited in amended claim 1 ("a next step indication . . . automatically displayed upon the user's completion of the first step"). In other words, the user must actively click on a "show-me" button 90 in Fig. 4 to be shown what

to do next, but Habib does not disclose or suggest being shown what to do is automatically provided for a sequence of steps.

Habib discloses additional detail regarding the balloon or bubble indicator in column 18, lines 3-24; however, the additional disclosure adds nothing more to what was disclosed in column 4, as described above.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that none of the help system embodiments (“help window,” “wizard,” or “show-me” help systems) teach or suggest Applicants’ claim 1 as now amended. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be withdrawn.

Independent claims 12, 23, and 24 are being amended to include similar limitations. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims should be allowed for similar reasons as described above.

Because claims 2-11 depend from claim 1, claims 13-22 depend from claim 12, and claims 25-34 depend from claim 24, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims should be allowed for at least the same reasons as the independent claims.

Applicants filed an Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) on January 12, 2005. Applicants request acknowledgment that the reference cited therein, U.S. Application No. 10/236,054, by Haggai Mark, filed September 4, 2002 (Attorney Docket No. 2386.2020-000), has been considered in the instant application.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that all claims (claims 1-34) are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,
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